

General  
Weller

## JAMES WILSON BRIGHT

1852-1926

The editors of MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES dedicate this volume to the memory of JAMES WILSON BRIGHT, the late editor-in-chief. The retirement of Professor Bright marks the end of an era. When he came to the Johns Hopkins University, in 1879, as a young graduate student, he found graduate study and research still in its beginnings in America. The university to which he came, the *alma mater* of American graduate schools, had been open for only three years, and more than a decade was destined still to elapse before the establishment of the Harvard Graduate School and the opening of the University of Chicago. Bright came, therefore, to the only institution as yet organized in this country for advanced instruction. He threw himself enthusiastically into the new movement which President Gilman and his associates had inaugurated, and became one of the pioneers of the higher learning in America. Philology was his chosen field, and here indeed he found the workers few and the need great. Classical philology, it is true, had already begun to thrive, under the inspiring leadership of Gildersleeve. But modern philology was still in leading-strings, and was looked upon by the general public as a field meet for Continental refugees and broken-down clergymen rather than for men of science. Yet the greater the need the greater the opportunity, and men like Elliott, Cook, Wood and Bright were at hand to lay the foundations for that scientific activity to which this journal is devoted. After some hesitation, Bright chose English philology as his special field. He took his doctor's degree at Johns Hopkins in 1882, and after some semesters of study in Germany returned to this country in 1884. He was made Instructor in English in the University in 1885, Associate in 1887, Associate Professor in 1891 and Professor in 1893. In 1905 he was appointed to the Caroline Donovan Professorship. He became Professor Emeritus in 1924. He died November 29, 1926.

Apart from his distinguished contributions to learning in his chosen field, Bright's greatest title to remembrance will lie in the fifty-five doctors of philosophy whom he trained in the ways of

science and sent forth to spread the gospel of learning pure and undefiled. But the part which he played in the history of this journal is of special interest to us and to our readers. This part was a notable one. He was one of the original board of editors that Elliott gathered round him, and from the beginning he helped to shape the ideals and the policy of the journal. In 1916 he became its editor-in-chief, and only at the beginning of the present year did he retire from active participation and leave to younger hands the task of carrying on. The editors offer this, the first volume published under their direction, as a tribute to his memory.

K. M.

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